

1329

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ELY,
ON
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1789,
BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A
GENERAL THANKSGIVING
TO
ALMIGHTY GOD
FOR
HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY,
By CÆSAR MORGAN, M.A. K.
MINOR CANON AND PREACHER IN THAT CHURCH.

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MDCCLXXXIX.

1404

THE
 CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ELY



ALMIGHTY GOD
 HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY

BY CESAR MONOD, M.A.
 MINISTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ELY

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MDCCLXXIX

TO THE
HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
J A M E S,
LORD BISHOP OF ELY,

THIS
DISCOURSE,
IS
WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT
INSCRIBED
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST DUTIFUL
AND OBLIGED SERVANT AND CHAPLAIN,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

J. A. M. S.

LORD BISHOP OF ELY



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THE AUTHOR.

S E R M O N, &c.

P S A L M lxxi. 18.

O WHAT GREAT TROUBLES AND ADVERSITIES HAST THOU SHEWED ME! AND YET DIDST THOU TURN AND REFRESH ME; YEA, AND BROUGHTEST ME FROM THE DEEP OF THE EARTH AGAIN.

IT was the assertion of a learned and noble Roman, that the man, who inculcated upon him a disbelief of the superintending Providence of God, communicated to him a very desirable doctrine,

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and delivered him from great fear*. For, says he, who that believes himself to be always observed by God, can avoid being impressed day and night with a perpetual horror of the divine inspection; and attributing every misfortune, which may befall him in life, to the appointment of a just judge? This persuasion, which seemed so overpowering to the Roman, is entertained at least without horror by the humble Christian. The former professed to dedicate his life, in private to the pursuit of knowledge and the enlargement of his intellectual powers; and in public to the advancement of the honour and prosperity of his country in general, and to the defence of injured innocence and the punishment

* *Næ, ille (Strato) et Deum opere magno liberat et me timore. Quis enim potest (cum existimet a Deo securari) non et dies et noctes divinum numen horrere? et si quid adversi acciderit, (quod qui non accidit?) intimescere ne id jure evenerit? Cic. Acad. II. 38.*

nishment of daring or triumphant wickedness in particular. On account of these pursuits and services he hoped and expected to obtain a place in the memory of his grateful countrymen from generation to generation. The latter, on the contrary, is strongly impressed with the sense of his own demerits, and of the stains and imperfections, which adhere to his best performances. Whence is it then, that the heathen Statesman and Philosopher, with all his boasted excellencies, trembled at the idea of that inspection, which is contemplated with complacency by the conscious sinner? These opposite effects, produced by the same doctrine, are to be attributed to the different moral states of the minds, into which it is received; and to the different conceptions, entertained by each, of the nature and attributes of God.

The moral state of the mind of a man is ascertained neither by its pursuits nor its active endowments; but by the motives, which excite and enervate their exertion. Actions and qualifications may be well suited to attract the admiration of *men*, which appear foul and deformed in the sight of *God*, to whom all things are naked and open. He, who judgeth not, as man judgeth, might perceive, that many of those actions originated in vanity, ambition, or enmity, which erring mortals were willing to attribute to magnanimity, or patriotism, to compassion towards the distressed, or indignation against vice. No wonder, that a man, so circumstanced, should shudder at the penetrating scrutiny of a Being, upon whom no artifices can impose, against whom no disguises can prevail, and whose observation no sinister motive can escape.

escape. Very different from this is the mind of the Christian, who enjoys a rational tranquillity under the conviction of the superintending Providence of God, who is a witness to every thing, that passeth within him, and marketh what is done amiss. He is conscious indeed, that he is a sinner; for what man is he, who sinneth not? But he is likewise conscious, that he makes it the business of his life to attain that end, for which he was sent into the world, namely, the advancement of the glory of God by the improvement of his own spiritual nature and the practice of moral virtue. Though he is fully sensible, that, in his most successful exertions, he falls far short of that purity, which the laws of God require; yet he knows, that much of this deficiency is owing to the imperfection of his nature; and he humbly hopes, that, by the operations of the

Holy Spirit aiding his own feeble but constant endeavours after righteousness, he may at length attain to that state of religious improvement, which, by the terms of the Christian covenant, will procure him admission into the inheritance of the Saints in light.

But secondly, the opposite effects, produced by the doctrine of a superintending Providence in these different minds, will be influenced in a great degree by the different opinions, which they severally entertain of the nature and attributes of God. — The heathen Philosopher appears to have formed in his mind the idea of a rigid and inflexible judge, always watching for an opportunity to inflict the extremity of punishment upon the hapless delinquent. — But this is not the representation, which the Christian religion has given us of the
judge

judge of all the earth. The language of Revelation is, "If thou, Lord, wert extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who might abide it? But there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared." It is upon this fundamental principle, that the religion of the Old and New Testament is established. This vivifying spirit pervades it in every part, and diffuses over it the captivating charms of vigour and beauty.

The whole scheme of Revelation is founded upon the goodness of God, and the interest which he takes in the welfare of his creatures. It was solely through a desire of communicating happiness, that the only self-existent independent Being undertook the great work of creation, at the completion of which "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of

“God shouted for joy*.” While man continued in innocence; he was the delight of his creator, was admitted to a free converse with him, and found in that infinite source of perfection an all-sufficient support of his weakness, and an abundant supply of all his wants. — Even when this immediate intercourse with God was interrupted by the presumptuous rebellion of man; we see the punishment, which justice required to be inflicted, mitigated by the unsolicited mercy of the judge himself, as far as was consistent with the true end of government, the real and permanent happiness of the governed. — The call of Abraham, God’s dealings with the Patriarchs, and his peculiar establishment of the Jewish Polity, originated in the same principle. — In all the divine dispensations with that rebellious and stiff-necked people,

* Job xxxviii. 7.

people, the inhaustible treasures of the goodness of God are conspicuous in an eminent degree. "I have loved thee," says Jehovah, "with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee*." — But the greatest instance of the divine goodness is that, which was displayed in the concluding dispensation, which was brought about and perfected by the incarnation, the sufferings, the death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communication of the Holy Ghost.

An habitual reflection upon these proceedings of the Deity, which are familiar to the true Christian, will very much abate the terror, that must necessarily have been impressed upon the minds of

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the best and wisest heathens, when they presented to themselves the idea of an all-powerful Being, who was privy to their most secret actions, and a discernor of their inmost thoughts. A Christian, who is thus instructed, being persuaded, that he is always acting in the presence of a righteous God, to whom, by the law of his nature, he is accountable for his actions, will endeavour to keep himself holy, as he is holy. He will be careful to examine minutely into the motives and reasons of his proceedings, being assured, that they will one day be canvassed by a God of infinite wisdom, upon whom no subtilities or evasions can impose. No privacy will be able to tempt him to indulge in any impure thoughts or actions, since he knows, that the time will come, when they will be all exposed in the presence of men and angels.

Indeed,

Indeed, there is no one among the sons of men, who has made a just estimate of the imperfections and obliquities of his nature, that can avoid being struck with the greatest degree of selfabasement; when he endeavours to raise his thoughts to a Being of that transcendent excellence, that "he putteth no trust in his servants, and "chargeth his angels with folly*." But, when we consider, that for man, weak and corrupted in his nature, God sent his only begotten Son into the world, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: when we call to mind the gracious promises held forth to us in the New Testament; that the Holy Ghost is ever ready to enlighten the ignorant, and assist the weak, who sincerely and earnestly apply for his admonitions and support; the

* Job iv. 18.

best and surest foundations are laid for that love, which casteth out fear, as derogatory to its honour, and even inconsistent with its nature. For, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, observeth with equal truth and delicacy of sentiment, "He, that feareth, is not made perfect in love." The words, which David used with sufficient propriety to describe his own situation under the Mosaical dispensation, are still more applicable to the circumstances of a Christian, and to the sentiments, which ought naturally to result from them.

"The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can
 "I lack no thing. He shall feed me in a
 "green pasture, and lead me forth beside
 "the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the
 "paths of righteousness for his name sake.
 "Yea, though I walk through the valley
 "of the shadow of death, I will fear no
 "evil:

“ evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and
 “ thy staff comfort me*.”

This persuasion of a divine superintending Providence, ever watchful over the affairs of men and directing their ways, is productive of such important moral and religious effects; that the system of the divine government of the world is evidently directed to the preserving it alive and vigorous in the human mind. A state of continued tranquillity is the most fatal of any to active principles of virtue and piety; which are apt to grow languid and dormant, unless they be roused by perpetual incitements.—Hence the affairs of individuals and nations are generally in a state of fluctuation and change. Industry, temperance, and wisdom are commonly rewarded by prosperous success. Dissipation, luxury,

* Psalm xxiii. 1, &c.

luxury, and folly, are still oftener the forerunners of ruin and disgrace. Thus is an ample and sufficient encouragement held out to the cultivation of the former qualities, and an awful warning announced to those, who are inclined to indulge themselves in the latter evil propensities. But if this should uniformly happen: if the practice of the social virtues regularly insured worldly prosperity, without any deviation; that would come to pass in general, which was said of the Israelites, and was eminently verified in the history of that nation, "Jesurun waxed fat and kicked." The mind of man is so little capable of supporting uninterrupted prosperity in the present frail and uncertain state, that the very blessings, which the benevolent father of the universe has appointed as the general and natural rewards of human virtue, would, if invariably dispensed, undermine

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and subvert those moral qualities, which they were intended to establish and improve. Hence it is, that not only the wicked are subject to feel the rigour of divine vengeance; but even the good (if any can be considered as good in the sight of God) are, in this state of trial, exposed to the arrows of adversity, and liable to have the cup of life dashed with the bitter dregs of calamity.

Innumerable instances of this appear both in the humble paths of private life, and in the more exalted and distinguished ranks of society; which produce their proper effects within the several spheres of their action. But when the attention of States and Nations is to be engaged: when Kings and Princes are to be roused from that lethargy, into which they are too apt to sink, and to be prepared to receive
strong

strong and lasting impressions of the instability of human grandeur and power, and of all, that is connected with this world; then does the Governor of the Universe, for the display of his authority, make choice of an object, that, by the dignity of his station and celebrity of his character, is qualified to produce so extensive an influence: then are the inhabitants of the earth taught, that neither the greatest of Kings nor the best of men are for a moment secure from the common and most humiliating infirmities of human nature. Some times these awful visitations are temporary: at other times they are lasting: but they are always directed to the ultimate end of divine government, the reformation of the world.

None of you are ignorant of the astonishment, the confusion, and horror, which

which overspread these united kingdoms, when, in the midst of their most sanguine expectations of public prosperity and private happiness, their feasts were turned into mourning, and their mirth into sadness; with what impatience men waited for the official accounts of each returning day; with what anxiety they speculated upon the most minute changes of the disorder; and what despondency there was visible in every countenance, when the faint but flattering expectations, excited by the report of the former day, were not confirmed by the succeeding.

But almighty God has, in the abundance of his mercies, vouchsafed to hear the prayers of a loyal people, and, in a manner extraordinary and almost unexpected, to remove from our gracious Sovereign the pressure of that grievous calamity,

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with which he was for a time afflicted. Scarcely ever was a great and numerous people so generally united in their sentiments, as upon this occasion. Joy and gladness have diffused themselves into every part of these extensive realms. Men of all ranks and conditions have been forward to testify their happiness, and to tender their congratulations upon so important an event, which involves in it so many circumstances of private and public bliss; which, by restoring a most affectionate husband and father to an endearing circle of relatives, has renewed the interrupted course of private felicity; and, by replacing an admired prince upon the throne of his ancestors, has again established public confidence and tranquillity upon their proper foundations. We are here assembled to return thanks to the Father of the Universe for so signal a blessing. Let us all seriously reflect

reflect upon the nature of the solemnity, and endeavour to produce in our minds those effects, which the occasion requires.

We should learn from this instance of our Sovereign, by what a precarious tenure we hold all our earthly possessions both as men and as citizens, and even our rank in this life as intelligent Beings. When, therefore, we return our thanks to God for the favour, which he has shewn to this nation in removing the late calamity of our Sovereign; let us, at the same time, remember to make our grateful acknowledgments to the same benevolent Being for the many years of happiness and prosperity, which we had before enjoyed under his auspicious government; each moment of which period was, in its own nature, liable to the same, or even, if possible, to greater interruptions.

Let us, likewise, call to mind, that, by the constitution of our nature, we are also ourselves, in our own persons, subject to the same humiliating stroke of calamity. This circumstance should, above all others, operate on our minds upon this occasion, and produce in them exquisite and unspeakable feelings of gratitude to the father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who alone is able to preserve us from the innumerable calamities, which every where surround us, and under the shadow of whose wings only we can dwell in safety. " Let not the wise man glory
 " in his wisdom, neither let the mighty
 " man glory in his might: let not the rich
 " man glory in his riches: But let him,
 " that glorieth, glory in this, that he un-
 " derstandeth and knoweth me, that I am
 " the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness,
 " judgement, and righteousness in the
 " earth ;

“earth; for in these things I delight, saith
 “the Lord*.” We may and ought to
 feel and express our joy upon this occa-
 sion; but it should be such a joy, as be-
 cometh men, who profess holiness. The
 wisdom, riches, and power of man are
 more fleeting, than even the transient Be-
 ings to whom they belong. The wisdom
 of the most perfect among the sons of men
 may in a moment be turned into foolish-
 ness: Riches make themselves wings, and
 fly away: And he, who is to day a king,
 may to-morrow be humbled in the dust.
 “Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings, be
 “instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve
 “the Lord with fear, and rejoice with
 “trembling †.”

But these circumstances, which should
 temper and moderate the joy of the pro-
 perous, may with equal propriety be ap-
 plied

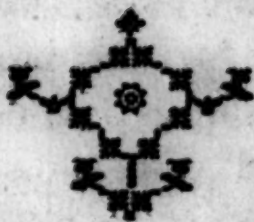
* Jer. ix. 23.

† Psalm ii. 10, 11.

plied to cheer the spirit, and raise the hope of the disconsolate and distressed. Meditate upon these things, O thou afflicted soul, who art weighed down by the burden of thy calamity. Let them strike deep root into thy mind, and produce their genuine fruits. "O tarry thou the Lord's leisure: be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord." Consider the late situation of the illustrious Personage, whose recovery we are assembled to celebrate. Represent to thyself the depth of misery, to which he was plunged: then learn, from the thanksgivings and exultations of a pious, loyal, and affectionate people, that the Sun of righteousness has risen upon him with healing in his wings: and that he is now bowing himself down in the house of his God, pouring out his soul in gratitude for the inestimable blessings, which he has lately

lately received, and humbly acknowledging, that the kingdom is the Lord's, and that he giveth it to whomsoever he will.

May the supplications and thanksgivings of the Prince and his people find acceptance at the throne of Grace: May the Almighty give his Angels charge concerning him: And may he continue, with undiminished lustre to the evening of his days, to "be
" as the Sun, when he goeth forth in his
" might."



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